

(**Washington D.C.**)-Representative Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, (D-VA-3), announced his support for legislation that would increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour over two years. Rep. Scott signed a discharge petition that would force consideration of the Miller-Owens bill (H.R. 2429) to raise the federal minimum wage.

Specifically, the bill would gradually raise the minimum wage by \$2.10 -- from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour-- over two years. The bill raises the minimum wage to \$5.85 60 days after enactment; to \$6.55 one year later; and to \$7.25 one year after that.

Rep. Scott is a long time supporter of assistance to low-wage workers and their families. While serving in the Virginia State Senate in 1991, Rep. Scott introduced Senate bill 834 which required Virginia's minimum wage to mirror the federal minimum wage rate. Rep. Scott's bill passed and Virginia's state minimum wage has continued to increase with the federal rate.

The last time Congress voted to raise the minimum wage was in 1996. The law increased the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$4.75 in 1996, and then from \$4.75 to \$5.15 in 1997, where it remains today. Each year the federal government fails to act, minimum wage workers pay the price, as the rising cost of living erodes the value of their paycheck.

"I am fighting for a modest increase in the minimum wage for more than 153,000 workers in Virginia." Rep. Scott stressed, "Working families in Virginia definitely need this increase. With dramatic increases in costs for health care, energy and housing, workers find it more difficult to pay for more with the same wage they have received for about a decade. Even if the new minimum wage is approved, it is still below the value of the minimum wage in 1997, when adjusted for inflation."

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